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Virginia Travel Guide Named Best in the Nation

*-2008 Live Passionately - Virginia is for Lovers travel guide wins
TIA Mercury Award for marketing excellence-*

(Richmond, Va.) The Olympics have just concluded but Virginia is still bringing home the gold, this time for the state travel guide produced by the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

The 2008 *Live Passionately – Virginia is for Lovers* travel guide received the Travel Industry Association (TIA) Mercury Award in the print visitors guide category. The Mercury Awards, presented by TIA's National Council of State Tourism Directors, were awarded on August 26 at the annual conference, and recognize members for excellence and creative accomplishment in state/territory tourism marketing and promotion.

“Tourism is an \$18 billion industry in Virginia, supported by our marketing efforts,” said Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation. “Our travel guide is key to enticing visitors to extend their stay in Virginia and spend more money in our communities along the way.”

Live Passionately-Virginia is for Lovers is the theme for the award-winning guide, which tells the story of more than 30 Virginians whose personal passions and deep love of life make Virginia an enriching travel destination.

Renowned photographer Cameron Davidson captured each of these “Portraits of Passion” doing what they love in photographs throughout the guide. These passionate Virginians are innkeepers, winemakers, outdoor guides, chefs and musicians from across the state who are ready to welcome visitors and make their visit memorable.

Leisure Publishing in Roanoke partnered with VTC to produce the guide, which is mailed to potential visitors and distributed at Virginia welcome centers.

The travel guide resources, from state park listings to historic trails to nearly 140 wineries, are supported by www.Virginia.org, the Commonwealth’s official travel site. Online visitors can watch the Portraits of Passion video vignettes, enter to win the *Find the One You Love Wine Month Sweepstakes*, plan a getaway to Virginia and discover their travel “passionality” with an interactive quiz.

Tourism is one of Virginia’s most powerful industries, generating \$17.7 billion in visitor spending, supporting 208,000 jobs and providing \$1.2 billion in state and local taxes for Virginia’s communities.



NEWS

Go to www.Virginia.org to view the award-winning Virginia travel guide online and for the latest on fall getaways and trip planning. Or call 1-800-VISITVA for Virginia travel resources.

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